

# The Modern Language Journal

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# THE Modern Language Journal

Volume I

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## PRACTICAL PHONETICS IN JUNIOR COLLEGE FRENCH

It may be assumed that college teachers of elementary French agree as to the desirability of training students to pronounce French as well as they can be got to do it. There must be few now who say: "Americans can never learn to pronounce French reasonably well without a disproportionate expenditure of time, or without long residence in the country; therefore, why try to do the impossible? Let our classes read good French books, learn to know and respect French ideas and ideals, and thus get an essential to their culture, instead of striving fruitlessly after something, which, even could he get it, not one student in ten ever needs".

If such a view belongs to a former period in the history of modern language teaching, the question immediately arises: How can we give, most economically and effectively, to students who have passed the age of facile and unthinking imitation, workable instructions for pronouncing French? I hold that nothing does so much to supplement the teacher's practice and example as clear and simple explanations of the physiological processes involved in making the sounds of the language. Not that imitation can be dispensed with; it is of primary importance. No teacher who has a poor pronunciation can hope that his students will escape the penalty of constantly hearing the sounds badly made, no matter what system he may summon to his aid. There is no magic in phonetics, nor in any other auxiliary. If asked to counsel a prospective teacher of French I should urge first the acquisition of a good pronunciation, and next the study of the changes that take place when he shifts from the mother tongue to the language he is going to teach. Faithful, however, to my belief in the efficacy of phonetics, I should certainly add that the study of these changes

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Read in part at the Romance departmental meeting, Central Division of M. L. A., Chicago, Dec., 28, 1916.

under competent guidance would materially lighten his labors during his own period of preparation, as well as prove useful to him when teaching.

Now it is an interesting fact that many excellent teachers who condemn the use of phonetics are, without knowing it, phoneticians of a very effective type. They react violently against the use of phonetic transcription and think that they are rejecting phonetics. What they are really doing is to reject an extremely useful supplement to the physiological explanations of which they make constant use. Such a teacher, while disclaiming any knowledge of, or interest in "your phonetics", showed me recently how she demonstrated to beginners the position of the organs and the placing of the sounds in the oral cavity. It would be a great gain for themselves if these teachers admitted the term phonetics to their vocabulary, with all that it implies, and profited by the system and accuracy to be gained from utilizing the excellent work that specialists have done in this field.<sup>1</sup>

## I

This is the point of departure for a rapid exposition of how we apply phonetics to the teaching of pronunciation in the beginning year at the University of Chicago. My remarks apply particularly, of course, to what is done in my own classes, and though I believe they are applicable also to the experience of my colleagues in this type of instruction, the situation almost forces me to speak in the first person.

We have from 20 to 30 students in each section: some sections consist of men or of women alone; others are mixed. The sections meet five times each week. Among beginners I am inclined to think that the women are more apt at pronunciation; in the second year it is difficult to say, for the proportion of men is too small for a fair comparison.

On the first day the class is told that totally new speech habits must be formed; that no sound in French is made in just the same way as the corresponding sound in English; and that this fact must be borne in mind in any comparison or contrast of the two.

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<sup>1</sup>A useful aperçu of the subject is to be found in an article by E. B. Babcock, *School Review*, XXI, p. 608 sq.



The next step is to emphasize the most apparent differences: the vastly greater play of the lips in French (which is easily illustrated), the increased muscular tension, the larger radius and greater rapidity of tongue activity (also easily demonstrated, as in the passage from [i] to [o]). For these illustrations the instructor walks about the class room, repeating the demonstration in plain view of each pupil, until these elemental facts seem quite clear to every one. There need be no hesitation about devoting a large part of the first period to this. It always interests the students, and prepares them for the request to bring a hand mirror to class, and for the use that is subsequently made of this valuable aid in the application of explanations to practise. All these statements will have to be repeated numberless times for the benefit of some members of the class, but that is true of every item of importance at the elementary stage, and the teacher with a soul above repetition will either pass unpleasant hours at this period or he will devise some original and startling way of presenting the same thing without seeming to repeat, for here, above all, Brunot's dictum holds: *la répétition est l'âme de l'enseignement*. Another reason for insisting on these demonstrations from the first is that there is always a certain tendency on the part of the students to be amused at them, and the surest way to banish undue laughter is to have them grow accustomed from the beginning to regard such oral acrobatics as a normal part of the work, both for teacher and pupils.

The next step—and there will be some time left for this at the first meeting—is to take up the vowels. I have found no more satisfactory way of doing so than by the use of the vowel triangle, accompanied by a rough indication of the conformation of the mouth. It would be better, of course, to have accurate drawings to illustrate these explanations, but I know of none that are quite satisfactory.<sup>2</sup>

The first step is to make clear the distinction between letters and sounds in English and in French, and the class is told that the sacred doctrine of five vowels must be abandoned as false and use-

<sup>2</sup>The drawings in Dumville: *Elements of French Pronunciation and Diction*, London, Dent, are useful. I have had some of these reproduced roughly as a wall chart. Dent's chart, *Sons du français*, is also useful. I know of no such helps published by American firms.

less. It is pointed out that though the French uses the Roman alphabet, its vowel system is more elaborate than this fact would indicate to beginners, and that its sounds are totally different from those for which the Roman letters stand in our native tongue.

## II

Then the students are asked to get out their small mirrors—or, perhaps, the teacher distributes from his box of hand mirrors—and the demonstration begins, the instructor being careful to seek simplicity in terminology and brevity of description, while endeavoring to be accurate in describing the phenomena.

1. With corners of lips sharply drawn back, muscles tense, teeth very close together (so close that a sheet of paper will just pass between them), and tongue set firmly against the lower teeth, so that the tongue almost touches the hard palate, we make the sound [i].

In this case, as in all that follows, the instructor demonstrates the position, first silently, then pronouncing the sound, and before asking the class to attempt it, he requests them first to practise taking the position with the mirror as their guide, and then to make the sound. Here, too, as in the other vowels, he warns them of the danger of undue lengthening; and shows how it leads to shift of position and consequent diphthongization.

The symbol for this sound is put in its place in the mouth diagram, which is drawn on the board as a preliminary to all the lessons at this stage, and the next sound is taken up.

2. With lip corners still retracted, tongue tip still against teeth, blade of tongue slightly lower, and teeth slightly farther apart, we make the sound [e]. The muscular tension is somewhat less than for the vowel above, and the greater jaw angle takes care of the altered tongue height, but as the struggle against too much relaxation of the muscles is to be constant, especially in making this sound, this element does not get much attention. The sound is practised as above with the mirrors, and an even more vigorous warning is given against lengthening it than for the first sound. The dangers of such lengthening are more easily indicated orally than in print; in phonetic transcription the result is something like [ei] or [eɪ]. After entering this vowel in its place we proceed to the next sound.

3. The jaw angle is increased, the lip tension is lessened, and we make the sound [ɛ]. It is pointed out that the teeth are about

far enough apart to admit the tip of the middle finger, or the handle of a fountain pen. The sound is practised and entered in order on the triangle.

4. With a perceptible increase in the jaw angle, a consequently perceptible drop of the tongue blade, a barely perceptible remnant of lip corner retraction, we make the sound [a]. This is one of the most difficult sounds for our students; they pronounce either the vowel of *fat* or that of *father*, usually the former. The mirrors are useful here in helping the students to realize that the blades of their tongues are slightly but perceptibly higher for the vowel of *fat* than for the French vowel. The instructor first demonstrates this, standing with open mouth in plain view of all the class, and by insisting on this point, usually gets a good result.

At this stage it is advisable to put a series of questions to the class in order to bring out the reasons for placing the symbols in the order adopted, and to make clear the regular progression, backward and downward of the series.

The class is then ready to ascend the other side of the triangle.

5. With the organs in the [a] position, we remove all muscular tension from the lip corners and lower the tongue from point to middle so that the tip falls away from the lower teeth slightly. This is the beginning of the retraction of the tongue in the mouth. In this position we produce the sound [ɑ], which is practised and entered in its place. In speaking of [a] and [ɑ], we do not use **close** and **open**; since the propriety of these terms is debated; **front** and **back** respectively are quite satisfactory, if names are needed.

6. Then with little or no change of the jaw angle, but a slight withdrawal of the tongue and a broad rounding of the lips, we produce the sound [ɔ]. The opening here is about large enough to admit freely the tip of the little finger.

7. The passage to the next sound, [o], is easy: the tongue is further back and the lips are vigorously projected and rounded. The students are urged to keep their lip muscles taut, leaving an opening just large enough to admit a lead pencil. The general configuration of the opening for both these sounds is of course imitated from the instructor, so no special directions are needed as to the difference between them in this respect, as would be necessary in a written description of the sounds.

8. One step further in the same direction gives us [u], with a lip opening barely large enough to admit a small pencil.

At every point in this demonstration no opportunity is lost to make comparisons with our own speech habits. This is easy and especially necessary for the rounded vowels and for [i] and [e]. It

must be done also for [a], which some members of the class get and retain only after weeks of practice. Each one, however, knows precisely what his difficulty is and is in a position to practise privately with the aid of a mirror. The problem at this stage is one of diligence and muscular coordination on the part of the student, and of repetition and persistent encouragement on the part of the instructor.

Next in order is the explanation of the front rounded vowels.

9. The instructor takes position for [i]. Then while the tongue is held tightly against the lower teeth, the lips are pushed forward and rounded energetically, and the class, instead of [i], hears [y]. The instructor repeats this several times, in dumb show and aloud, before allowing the class to try the sound, calling attention to the fundamental elements of tongue and lip position. The sound is practised and recorded in its place. The difficulties here are well known and are more easily diagnosed than removed. If one or more individuals say [u] it is because the tongue has gone back as the lips were rounded, and the instructor cries: "Tongue tip hard against the lower teeth!" If he hears the sound of English *you*, he knows that the tongue tip has slipped back during the utterance of the sound. He can check up on lip position by his eye, but must trust to his ear to detect mistakes in tongue position. Much practice of this sound is necessary, though, according to my observation, when the muscular movements have been once clearly grasped, it is reproduced more accurately than other sounds which are usually considered less difficult for Americans.

10. The process for the next sound is similar: starting from the [e] position and taking care to keep the tongue motionless, we advance the lips and round them tightly as for [o]; the result is [ø].

11. Similarly, with the mouth in the [e] position, the lips are advanced and rounded as to form [ɔ]; we get [œ].

For the last sounds the lip rounding is, of course, essential, and students have to be reminded of it again and again. Those who come from classes where this feature has not been insisted on often pronounce *bleu* as [blei]; many do not open their mouths wide enough for the [œ] sound, especially for words like *cœur*.

Here it is well to halt for review and practise, particularly for the three front rounded vowels. We go from [i] to [y]; from [u] to [y]; from [e] to [ø]; from [o] to [ø]; from [e] to [œ]; from [ɔ] to [œ], back and forth, forth and back, now in dumb show, now making the sound, and always watching the process in the mirror, until every one knows what ought to be done, even if the desired result is not



attained every time.<sup>3</sup> Much of this is done, of course, in chorus, and the instructor knows by this time which students must be particularly looked out for, and tested individually.

Next in order are the nasals. Here it is well to point out that in English the nasals are consonants only (**m**, **n**), made through the nose; that if the nasal passages be stopped quite other sounds result (**b**, **d**) unless a vigorous effort be made; that the French has as well nasal vowels made by vibration of air in both nasal and oral chambers, for which it is essential that there shall be no closing of the oral passages, as is the case when the tongue goes up for our **n** or the lips close for our **m**. This point must be emphasized and often repeated, for when students come to the traditional spellings their eye leads them astray, often despite themselves, and they say [ãnfã] for [ãfã].

There are various little experiments to convince the class of the difference between English and French nasals,<sup>4</sup> but I have not found it necessary to use them.

We proceed next to the demonstration of these sounds, disregarding the manifest weakness of the **Alphabet de l'association internationale** in regard to the nasals.

12. From [e] as a basis the center of the tongue and the soft palate are lowered, and the sound [ẽ] is produced, the mirror enabling us to observe the process. It would be simpler to start from [a] as a basis, as that involves a smaller change of tongue position, and simpler still from our vowel in *fat*, except that we should then have to add a slight retraction of the lip corners. But until we conclude to cut loose from the nasal symbols of the transcription we have adopted, it may be better to go the whole way, with beginners at least.

Suppose the student gets the final sound of English *sing*; it is evident that he has lifted the back of his tongue until it touches the soft palate, and thus produced a consonantal condition. This fault is not usually hard to correct, nor is it common in students of American speech habits.

13. Starting from [œ] a similar process is demonstrated for [œ̃] with insistence on lip rounding.

14. From [a] we reach [ã].

15. From [ɔ] we reach [õ]. Many teachers find it advisable to start from the [o] position so as to avoid the danger of getting [a]; that is of pronouncing *tromper* as *tremper*, *tondre* as *tendre*. This is debatable, though I am in the habit of inclining in that direction.

<sup>3</sup>See Churchman in *School Review*, XXII, p. 545 sq.

<sup>4</sup>See Passy, *Sons du français*, § 162.

All the vowels have now been described and practised repeatedly except (16). [ə] which gives little trouble to learn separately; it is more trouble to get it pronounced correctly in **de**, **me**, **le**, (which are often called [de], [me], [le]) and still more difficult to get it elided in the proper places, when we come later to reading aloud and to speaking. This, however, is a problem for a more advanced stage, except, of course, in such words as **amener**, **acheter**, which should be pronounced correctly from the time they are encountered.

The last time I went through the series as outlined above, with a beginning class, it occupied three recitation periods of 55 minutes, about, leaving just time at the end of the third period to go over the first lesson in the grammar text that we were to use, having the class pronounce after me the word list and the illustrative sentences. I felt that our time had been well spent, that all the members of the class, except two or three, pronounced the vowels singly with reasonable accuracy, that they could recognize the symbols, that they could explain the physiological processes with sufficient clearness, and that most of them were interested enough to work at home with their mirrors.

A. COLEMAN

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*(To be continued)*

## WHAT SHOULD AN EXAMINATION DISCLOSE AS TO THE ABILITY OF A STUDENT AT THE END OF HIS HIGH SCHOOL COURSE ?

This question is undoubtedly before the College Entrance Examination Board every time examination season rolls round. Is the student of the secondary school on graduation day the same student who enters college? If we agree that he is, then the examination set by the Committee should be along lines similar to those followed by his instructors in high school, if the examination is to find out *how much* he knows, not what he does *not* know. His best will not then be known for he plays his best game always on the home diamond. Such an examination can be set only by those who are thoroughly familiar with the secondary schools, who trust them and have faith in their purposes, jointly with those who know accurately what work is beyond the entering college Freshman which must be built on the secondary school foundations, the colleges beginning where the secondary school left off.

It would be interesting to the colleges to hear some criticisms among secondary school teachers when the hour hand points to the time for filling out those matriculation blanks—the duodecimo pages, the title, author, etc., of each and every book read in the three or four years and each blank different, some asking the average of the boy or girl, the number of weeks, the recitations per week and then as though the scribe had not given his last spark of vitality, a column for remarks is provided, which, if filled out at *that time*, would not form enjoyable reading. Why all this if examinations are given? We know it is never read, for if the number of pages is left out it does not interfere at all; if even whole books were omitted no one would ever know unless the registrar should find such reading interesting on some less busy day and suddenly discover that the number of pages is short, therefore a book has been omitted. It is *maddening* simply *maddening*. As if that were not enough, the student is sometimes required to make a part of his examination paper for college the list of books he has read in the secondary school. A pure waste of energy. Were someone

to ask us to tell what we have read the last six months, there is hardly one here who would waste his brain energy on so unprofitable an exercise.

What is really the object of the examination paper? To find out what *power* a student has to handle the language studied. Does that mean whether he can write neatly and in proper order the cases singular and plural, can inflect a designated tense of a verb, can give the vocabulary forms of so many German nouns? Shall we then know that he has power to handle a language? Questions such as these were disapproved of in the reports given by the Committee of Twelve before the National Education Association as far back as December, 1898, in these words: "An objection to an exclusive, or even a predominant use of this type of question is that it teaches the pupil to "rattle off" paradigms and rules but not to understand nor to use the language. Instead of learning to "think in German," as the phrase is, he learns to think grammar in the terms of his text-book. Were the colleges to require that sentences be written containing the various cases of the nouns cited, the specified tense of the verbs, then would appear what is really wanted, the ability or lack of ability to handle the language. An examination in carpentry would certainly not ask how many two-penny nails in a pound, for that is self-evident or how many keys accompany a Yale lock? The candidate would not be asked to describe a saw or a plane, but with saw, plane, nails, etc., he would be asked to make something, following specified plans, perhaps even to make the plans, until the unit was completed, be it a room or a miniature house.

Let us look at a few of the requirements of different colleges, for we are here for constructive criticism.

I. **Reading.** The number of pages of reading required in preparation for the various colleges ranges from 500 to 700 for the three unit credit. It is recommended by the colleges individually that this amount shall include classical and contemporary prose and poetry; still another says that if a classic is read then let it be only one; another declares that not more than one-third ought to be Lessing, Schiller and Goethe; still another strongly urges that besides the 600 pages there be "some rapid home reading of about 100 pages or *more*." Sometimes the college even specifies that the page shall be of a certain size, but I have never yet seen anywhere



stated how wide the margin of the page ought to be. Perhaps faith in the publisher makes that unnecessary. It may be remembered, however, that he too regulates the number of pages to the story. Could the Departments of Modern Languages not be content with knowing whether the ground covered meets with the requirements of the College Entrance Examination Board? That could be answered quickly and it is a method followed almost entirely by the Departments of English.

Even after the number of pages has been stipulated and the titles of books suggested, the examination based on this requirement at one college may contain *no* translation into English at all, while at another the translation of 22 lines or more is required. The examination at one college contained 62 lines of translation. Does this seem to you incongruous? If it does, then we agree, I hope, that *some* recognition of the completion of this work should be shown, some work should appear on the examination paper and be credited. It should not be considered merely as an asset. One can estimate a student's ability to translate into English, have him show that he understands what he reads, on the basis of twenty-five lines as well as on the basis of 2,500 lines. There is no value in length except for promoting carelessness, and inaccuracy in the English version, for only a certain amount can be well done in the designated time. A good translation is a work of care and of thought. If we do not believe this, let us pick up a piece of difficult German and give ourselves only time to write down the English. Then on reading our own rambling thoughts aloud, I am sure we shall find nothing flattering.

## II. Grammar.

### A. Here are some of the Grammar questions asked:

Conjugate in the second person singular the verb "mitnehmen" in all tenses, indicative, subjunctive and conditional mood, active and passive voice. Why this number and person? Is it because it is the most important? Is it because work in college will be based on it? Suppose the second person singular of verbs were left out of all grammars used in America, and this has been suggested, what would the American boy or girl lose by the omission? Why not ask for half as many or one-fourth as many forms and require a *usable* person and number in correct sentences? Will the isolated

forms help him? Will he ever meet them, standing solitary and alone?

B. Now another question: Übersetzen sie Folgendes: The children were told a pretty story by their teacher and then they had to tell it to her again. State and explain the case of every noun in the sentence.

Does the question require the case in the English sentence in order that it may be understood before it is translated, or does the question refer to the case after the sentence is translated into German? Or must the student decide that? If the latter is meant, would not a correct translation satisfy or an incorrect sentence show that the case was not known and could therefore not be explained? This, question might profitably have given place to one asking for information not already given in the sentence itself.

C. Give with the definite article the nominative and genitive singular and nominative plural of certain nouns in the text.

These forms seem to be useless if, as in some instances, the context shows very plainly the case and gender, and worthless unless the student can make use of them in sentences. The latter can be done almost as quickly as the former, and tests the ability of the student from several points of view. Whereas, the forms simply test memory.

One can readily see the difference in value between those questions given and the following:

1. Distinguish in meaning between "verschwenden" and "verschwinden" "einzeln" and "einzig." Write substitutes for "unterdessen," "Kampf," "bloss," "es ihnen beliebte."

2. Illustrate by two sentences the difference in the use of "aber" and "sondern."

3. In lines 19 to 24 change the indirect discourse to what the boy actually said.

4. Give as many derivatives of "kennen" as you are familiar with, and use five of them in sentences.

5. Show in sentences the several uses of "wollen."

6. Answer in complete sentences: If you had been in Europe when the war broke out, what would you have done? If you were there now, what would you do? If your uncle is there now, what is he doing, perhaps?

If the question should be asked here, are the paradigms no longer memorized, are the synopses of verbs no longer given, are rules no more learned by rote? The answer would have to be, "Indeed they are!" But the teacher who is letting the declensions of nouns, the vocabulary forms, the synopses of verbs satisfy for complete grammar work, etc., that teacher is not heeding the instruction of prominent educators of to-day, who in strong terms denounce the teaching of isolated facts, isolated words. In Dewey, *How We Think*, "symbols stand for certain meanings to an individual only when he has had experience of some situation to which these meanings are actually relevant. Words can detach and preserve a meaning only when the meaning has been first evolved in our own direct intercourse with things. To attempt to give a meaning through a word alone without any dealings with a thing is to deprive the word of intelligible signification." Compare also Crane, *Changing the Viewpoint*: "Facts acquired while doing have glue on them and in them". Nor is that teacher complying with the recommendations of the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association of America, which in 1898 made this statement: "It appears, then, that the day of the pure grammar method is past; but, while devising a system more in accordance with the principles and possibilities of our times, let us not forget that the old-fashioned way had its good features."

Here are two questions given on the model test in this report of 1898 for the purpose of showing in a general way the kind of test which a candidate ought to be expected to pass upon completing the three year requirement.

A. Explain the use of "sein" and "haben" as auxiliaries of tense and put into German:

1. The boy has fallen into the water.
2. He has traveled much, but seen little.
3. I have remained too long.
4. I have been sitting in my room all day.
5. You have slept two hours.
6. The child has fallen asleep.

B. How do modal auxiliaries differ in conjugation from ordinary weak verbs, and how from strong verbs?

Put into German:

1. I will tell you something.
2. We cannot go.
3. He had to stay at home.
4. I should like to know.
5. She will not be permitted to come.
6. I have not been able to see him.

### III. Composition.

For the three unit or "Intermediate" requirement, a student must be able to write (a) a number of disconnected sentences which merely teem with rules, so that his thought changes with each sentence, or (b) a connected passage based on a given text, or it may be (c) a connected passage having probably no reference to the rest of the paper. (d) free composition on one of several different themes sometimes the line of thought or content being suggested. (e) free composition on three or four of four themes mentioned, or (f) there may be faulty German to be corrected, for example, "Gerade zu derselben Zeit einer der kleinsten Knaben lief so nahe an dem Pferde heran, dass der Kutscher auf dem Wagen sie nicht konnte mehr zurückhalten." This is a true example. Of all phases of grammar the one chosen, as you recognize, was that of *word order*.

How I should like to take the latter examiner into a classroom where an earnest teacher is illustrating in German that one phase of the subject probably more unlike English than any other—word order. The class is attentive, is eager to get it right and by dint of hard labor, of constant use of the inverted or transposed forms of expression by the teacher as well as by the child, the latter begins to have a feeling for the natural German word order and at the end of the composition work he seldom makes a mistake. Let us suppose that he knows the subject. Is the question good? Is it logical? Is it scholarly? If not, what is the object of such a question on a three unit examination? Why call his attention to something wrong? Do we learn to speak English from association with those who speak it incorrectly? What does one learn from such a question? What does the examiner learn from such a question? Could not a sentence have been required in which at least two types of word order were contained? A number of other



points in the same sentence would have testified, in addition, to the preparation of the student.

Of all these types of composition, and you recognize no two alike, the one which appeals to the secondary school most, the one that is a test of what the boy or girl really knows is the one (d) in German on themes in some way touching the life and thought of the boy or girl at that age. The next types would be, of course, the formal connected composition, (b) and (c). The others are simply inventions for the occasion, uninteresting, illogical in thought because disconnected and do not bring out any feeling for the language studied.

So far little has been said of the type of examination presupposing three years preparation and yet surpassing in difficulty and amount the BC examination of the College Entrance Examination Board. The full three hours is required for merely writing, with no opportunity for thinking. Any one can set such an examination. There are few who will be party to so heinous a crime against the innocent.

It is encouraging to see that credit will be given by a few of the colleges for oral or aural tests. Of course there will always be some who will want the 700 pages of reading, plus perfect grammar preparation, plus faultless composition, plus the 18 poems, plus ability to speak the language and to understand lectures and take notes on them in the foreign tongue, notwithstanding the additional time the use of the language in the secondary school must of course take.

It would seem a fair arrangement, fair to both colleges and secondary schools, if the College Entrance Examination Board would set a written examination to count 70 points only and leave it to each college either to admit the student on the basis of this written work or give him the opportunity to raise the percentage thirty points by an oral or aural test.

Much remains still to be done and if the secondary schools are not following the recommendations of the Committee of Twelve, have not yet gotten into line in the twenty years that have elapsed since this report of the committee came out in print, then students from those schools should be refused admission to college and those students who are prepared along the lines suggested by the colleges themselves should not be subjected to an examination based on a

grammar method when that method has been condemned by the Committee of Twelve, especially since this committee is quoted in almost every college catalog as authority for the requirements of the college. When we look at the examinations set by the College Entrance Examination Board, it is not quite clear whether the colleges are following the example of the College Entrance Examination Board or the College Entrance Examination Board is following the example of the colleges.

I wish to make a plea for a more modern type of examination, one which stands by the secondary schools if those schools are striving to follow a course which will prepare students to do the thing the colleges ask and the thing which the colleges more and more are stressing—a preparation in three years sufficient to enable the student to understand lectures in German. Of course he must also be able to take the notes in the language, or to do what is more difficult, to perform lightning feats of translation, if he takes his notes in English.

We are going backward two decades when we ask such questions as those given for the three year requirement or C3 in the Comprehensive Examination of September, 1916. I refer to (a) and (b). Decline the singular of "der deutschen Völker." Give with the definite article, the nominative and genitive, singular and the nominative plural of "Walde," "Zeiten," "Herzen," "Ketten," "Verräter." (b) Give with the third person singular of the present indicative active, the principal parts of "stiess," "rief," "herabgezogen," "überfiel," "nahm." I have read you the corresponding questions submitted in 1898 and I believe you agree with me that the requirement of the *facts* in grammar, followed by sentences to show whether the boy can put into practice what he has said, is far in advance of the two of 1916 just cited.

I wish to make a plea for flexibility in the type of examination, so that the secondary school may not narrow its course to fit the examination,—a *variable* examination, one which will have a surprise or two each year, entirely within the requirements of a three-unit examination as recommended by the College Entrance Examination Board, but one that may not be anticipated in its entirety of content and form by the secondary school. I wish to make a plea for an arrangement of the German examination analogous to that of the French with sufficient material in each

Part to satisfy the requirements without its being necessary that the student take Parts II and III, for instance, for the three-unit requirement. The French is arranged in three divisions, for C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>4</sub>, whereas in German the candidate must take two of the four Parts I and II for C<sub>2</sub>, II and III for C<sub>3</sub>, and III and IV for C<sub>4</sub>. We shall have better thought out examinations I believe, if the Board does not have to feel that Part II must be suitable for C<sub>2</sub> as well as for C<sub>3</sub>, and Part III serve the purpose of C<sub>3</sub> as well as C<sub>4</sub>. There may be a definite reason for the arrangement as it exists, but I am not familiar with the reason and can think of none myself. It gives each examination an appearance of extreme length, especially is this true of Parts I and II, and also of repetition of material, the increased difficulty not being sufficient to warrant the students taking what seems to be each time two examinations. The French has the variety of prose and poetry, as well as a variety of thought within both the prose selections and the poetry. The German prose, on the other hand, is all historical and allows the imagination no play.

I wish to make no plea as to the *difficulty*. The examinations are not too difficult for the students; in fact, they might be more difficult if they were of such a nature as to draw the student out more and make him show his *power* more.

What I have said has been as one speaking *for* the secondary schools on the subject of College Entrance Examinations, and this I have tried to do faithfully. Had I been asked to give the point of view of the colleges as a teacher in a secondary school sees it, I should have given you an entirely different paper. Whatever criticism may come from the colleges belongs to the program committee for having asked me to be the exponent of the secondary schools.

What I have said applies to the well organized city high school, for I know it best, but to a degree, also to the private school. It *cannot* apply to that type of high school which although known as "first class" cannot always depend upon having a language specialist for the modern languages. The Boards of Education must employ sometimes the teacher who can do several things equally well. If the colleges feel that I am either uninformed or misinformed, I shall be glad to be informed, for in one class we are preparing for a number of women's colleges and co-educational institutions, so the class must steer a course sometimes between Scylla and Charybdis.

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## THE INFLUENCE OF COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS ON THE TEACHING OF FRENCH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The question of college entrance examinations in modern languages is one that cannot fail to be of interest to all teachers of these languages. The fact that a majority of our students are preparing for college and will, therefore, have to take these examinations makes the question a very important one both for the college instructor and the secondary school teacher. The former wishes to have in his freshmen classes only students who have been well prepared in French and German; and the latter looks to these tests for the standard expected of his pupils. Examinations are not the goal we are aiming at in our teaching, but they do influence our work in school to a large extent. It is, then, very essential that we should know how these examinations are prepared and how they influence the teaching of French in secondary schools.

In this paper I shall discuss only the French examinations of the College Entrance Examination Board. I do not feel competent to pass judgment on the German examinations of the Board.

The three French papers, namely, the elementary, intermediate, and intermediate and advanced, are prepared with great care. A great deal of time and thought is devoted to their preparation. And right here I wish to remind you that the examiners for the Board are not free agents in the same sense that college professors are in making out their own tests. The Board papers have to be framed in such a way that they meet the requirements adopted by the Board. And these requirements are the ones suggested by the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association of America. The examiners cannot introduce all the innovations they would like, or make changes in the requirements as laid down by the College Entrance Examination Board.

Since 1908 each one of the three examiners in French has prepared one of the three papers. When the papers are ready they are sent to the examiners in turn for criticisms and suggestions. Then the examiners hold a conference further to discuss the papers, and frequently important changes are made. Next the papers are



looked over by a Committee of Revision made up of secondary school teachers and this committee sometimes insists on certain changes tending further to improve them. This procedure is followed in all the subjects offered by the Board. Before the papers are finally printed they are sent to the three examiners for proof reading. This plan was adopted at my suggestion in 1908 to avoid some of the gross errors that crept into the earlier examinations in French.

All the examiners in French are very careful to follow as closely as possible the requirements of the College Entrance Examination Board in preparing the three examinations. If you are not wholly satisfied with the kind of papers set, do not put all the blame on the committee of examiners. The thing to do is to see that the requirements are modified. The examiners cannot do this although they can and do try to interpret the requirements in a liberal spirit. For example, I have insisted lately that the questions on grammar be questions on applied grammar and not merely memory questions, such as giving lists of forms or stating rules. I believe that that is as it should be. Then, last year all the questions were stated in French on the B and BC papers, a concession to the advocates of the direct method. We also put on the elementary paper a few questions in French to be answered in that language. For several years opportunity was offered on the B and BC for free composition. Furthermore, a question on pronunciation has been added to the A paper, with the distinct purpose of encouraging teachers to lay more stress on oral work in preparing students for college. And until we have an aural test, as I hope we shall have before long, that is all the examiners can do to test the aural and oral preparation of the candidates in French. I am sure that that question, however unsatisfactory it may have been, has served its purpose in directing the attention of teachers of French to this all important phase of modern language instruction.

We have also exerted great care in the selection of the French passages to be translated. Of late years the selections have been taken entirely from modern authors, even for the BC paper. The aim of the examiners has been to choose material that would be within the capacity of boys and girls of sixteen, seventeen and eighteen to understand and interpret. Ever since I have served as associate examiner in French, (i. e. since 1907, except for the years

1914 and 1915), we have tried to grade the three papers as carefully as we could. We have kept in mind the fact that the selections to be translated into English were to be sight translations, and that, therefore, they should test the candidate's ability to read at sight. And when I say French I mean simple French for the A paper and French of ordinary difficulty for the other two papers.

The English sentences on the A paper and the connected passage of English on the intermediate paper have frequently been based on the French text. This is done to meet the requirements of the Board, which are as follows:

"At the end of the elementary course the pupil should be able . . . to put into French simple English sentences taken from the language of every day life or based upon a portion of the French text read. And at the end of the intermediate course . . . to translate into French a connected passage of English based on the text read." The passage of English on the BC paper is not based on the text to conform also to the requirements, which state that "the pupil should be able to translate into French at the end of the advanced course a passage of easy English prose as well as write a short essay on some simple subject connected with the works read." The examiners also feel that at this stage the pupil ought to be able to translate easy English prose into French. But it ought to be easy English, where the thought is not too complicated and the language simple.

The same care is taken in regard to the question which for lack of a better name I shall call free composition. Of late years the subjects chosen have been simple and well within the capacity of the candidate who is well prepared. I remember very well how poorly that part of the examination used to be answered by the majority of the candidates when it was first introduced. As a matter of fact it was so wretchedly done that very little credit could be given for it. Now, although there is room for improvement, we are getting much better results. This is due partly to the fact that the subjects chosen by the examiners for this free composition are not beyond the knowledge and ability of the candidates. They are no longer requested to write a hundred words on such indefinite subjects as "The French Revolution," "The Declaration of Independence" or "The San Francisco Earthquake." The subjects are selected from topics on which the

student has been drilled in class, namely, a railroad trip, the description of a school or classroom, a letter to friend inviting him (or her) to visit his home, the description of one of the characters of one of the books read in preparing for the examination, and other subjects like these. Sometimes definite directions are given so that the candidate will know just how to proceed. For example, on one of the papers last year the question was stated like this: "Faites en français la description de la maison que vous habitez. Dites où elle est située, combien d'étages elle a, ce qu'on voit devant et derrière la maison, etc. Décrivez l'une des pièces." With such definite directions the student knows just what is expected of him and can give a much better account of himself.

I have mentioned all these points to show you that the French examiners have endeavored to prepare examination questions that would be a fair test of the students preparation in French. Mistakes have been made, of course, but they have been mistakes of omission rather than mistakes of commission. As far as I know no French examiner has set a paper with the avowed purpose of catching the candidates by asking unfair questions.

A word about the marking of the French answer books may not be out of place right here and may throw some light on the results of the French examinations. The system used by the French readers is different from the one used by readers in other subjects. In the first place, no reader reads a whole book. While one reader reads the French passage, another reads the grammar question and the composition question. No marks are put in the book, but the value given to each part of the test is placed on the left hand upper corner of the cover of the answer book. Then the total credits are put in the proper place on the cover and signed by the two readers who have read this particular book. Any answer book marked less than 65% or more than 90% is re-read by two other readers to see if the first readers have made any mistakes or if they were too severe or too lenient in their marking. When there is a great difference in the values assigned to the different questions, then all the readers who have read this particular book consult to adjust the differences and to try to compromise on the values assigned. The plan may seem complicated at first glance, but a thorough study of the system will convince any one that it is a fair and impartial way of reading papers.

After serving as reader in French for over ten years and after using both methods, i. e. the method of reading the answer books as a whole or the method I have just described above of assigning different parts to the various readers, I must say that the latter is by far the better method. Greater accuracy in marking as well as greater speed is secured. It is almost impossible under this plan to condition a student who deserves to pass and to pass a student who ought to be conditioned. Each candidate gets a "square deal." The decision is not left to the judgment of one reader, but there are always at least two to pass judgment on every book. When you keep in mind that the French readers had 4602 answer books to correct last year, fully 819 more than the German readers had to read, and that the same number of readers were appointed in each subject, namely 25, you will understand how important is the question of speed and accuracy in marking. I ought to add that four of the French readers were assigned to the reading of the 92 Spanish books, so that the total number of answer books passed on by the French readers was 4,694.

Let us now consider how these French tests have influenced and are influencing the teaching of French in secondary schools. College examinations always have a certain influence on the work of the schools and can to a certain extent direct that work.

First of all, the ridiculous errors found in the earlier answer books are not so numerous now. It is true that the general character of these French examinations has been modified, as I have been trying to point out to you. But that does not explain the great difference that there is between the results of 1903 and 1904, for instance, and the results of 1914, 1915 and 1916. The real reason is to be found in the better preparation of the candidates. Teachers look to these examinations for a standard and plan their courses accordingly. I remember that in 1908, speaking before the Modern Language Teachers of New York City High Schools I made the statement that the chief reason for the poor showing of the candidates was their insufficient preparation to pass these tests. I no longer believe that is the case, at least, to such an extent. Candidates who are recommended by the schools usually do well. And I do not base my statement on the secretary's report only, but on my own personal observations as a reader in French. There are still many candidates who make bad mistakes, but the

general results are much better. That part of the examination which tests the real power of the student, namely, the English passage or the question on free composition, is answered in a much more satisfactory way than it was six or seven years ago. The French teachers know now what is expected of their pupils and they prepare them better. The same is true of the other parts of the examination. Pupils are being better trained in translating French into English and in the rudiments of French grammar. Fewer papers are marked very low on these two parts of the test. In short, the improvement along the whole line is very noticeable.

Again, the Board examinations in French have had some influence on the kind of texts which are read in schools. I am sure that very few schools are now reading 17th and 18th century authors, chiefly because the teachers know very well that no passage will be selected from authors earlier than the 19th century. Until last year I felt obliged to read some poetry with my intermediate class, because Princeton always put a poetical selection on its B paper and we always have a number of our boys who go to Princeton. Now, that is no longer necessary, as no poetry is put on the Board intermediate paper. We always reserve the passage in poetry for the BC paper. I mention this to show you how college examinations influence the secondary school teacher in the selection of the books he reads with his classes.

Several years ago the French examiners put a question on pronunciation on the elementary paper and a question on idioms on both the B and BC papers. It seemed to them that some recognition ought to be given to that all important feature of modern language teaching. The aim was not only to find out if the candidates could read French and knew certain idioms, but to call attention to the teachers of French to these two vital features of all language instruction. And I believe that aim has been attained. Teachers are certainly paying more attention now to pronunciation and the study of idioms, for the results obtained by candidates on this part of the examination is much better than it was at first. The question on pronunciation has not been an ideal question, because you cannot really find out in writing whether a student is able to read French or not. But it has made it clear to teachers that a correct knowledge of French sounds is an indispensable feature of secondary school work in that language.

So far we have been looking only on the bright side of the picture. Let us look on the other side also. It is a fact that no written examination has yet been offered which would prevent candidates from passing it who had an insufficient or improper knowledge of the subject. A student can learn how to translate French into English, memorize the necessary grammatical rules and forms, and secure enough drill in writing simple French sentences to pass the A paper and sometimes the B paper. And yet that student may have a very poor mastery of the language, may, in fact, know little about French. The practice of coaching pupils for college examinations without any regard for the actual acquisition of the subjects taught is still followed by some schools and by most of the summer camps. It is a vicious custom and only tends to lower the standard of modern language teaching. Let me give you an example.

Not long ago a new student entered one of my second year classes in French. This young man had been studying French for a year and a half or more at two different schools. He had just come from one of the oldest and best known boys' schools in the country. As usual I was conducting part of the recitation in French. I gave the class a dictation exercise in French and as this was a second year class no explanation was necessary. But the new boy seemed so bewildered that I asked him to stop after the class so as to find out the cause. He told me then that he had studied French a year and a half. During the first half year he studied *Chardenal* and the rest of the time Fraser and Squair's *Shorter Course*, the book I use with that class. I also found out that at the last school he attended they cover in one year all the lessons of the *Shorter Course* and study besides all the important irregular verbs and read in addition Super's *French Reader*. I asked him if his teacher used French in the classroom and gave them dictations in French. He said no. And I am sure he was telling the truth for he could not understand the simplest classroom French. Yet that school is sending boys to Harvard, Yale, Princeton and other colleges. The students prepared in those classes where French is not heard, or very little anyway, succeed in passing college examinations in French and German, and still are unable to understand a word of the spoken language or even read the language correctly. And this is not an unusual case. In the summer camps or coach-



ing schools they neglect absolutely the aural and oral side of modern language teaching and why? Simply because they know that that feature of modern language teaching is not at all necessary to pass successfully the college examinations in French and German. That is a problem we must face and the solving of which will go a great way toward raising the standard of modern languages in school and college.

Can we so frame modern language examination papers that it will be impossible for schools to do what many are doing? I am not ready to answer that question offhand. I believe we should give it a great deal of thought and seek a solution. We all believe in thorough preparation on the part of our students. The college instructor does not wish in his classes students who are poorly equipped. The secondary school teacher feels that his efforts to give his pupils a sound and thorough knowledge of French or German will have been in vain, if anybody, who has studied these languages a few weeks, can succeed in passing college entrance examinations in these subjects. Can this be avoided? I am sure it can be, but we shall have to modify our entrance requirements and frame examinations in such a way that students insufficiently trained in modern languages will be unable to pass them successfully.

In the first place all colleges ought to insist on an aural and oral test for modern languages. No candidate should be admitted to the freshman classes in French or German who has failed to pass these tests. An exception might be made for candidates who offer modern languages for entrance but who do not propose to elect this subject in college. But for all other candidates the ability to understand the foreign language and to answer simple questions in that language ought to be made compulsory.

I would also insist on more accuracy and greater efficiency in writing the foreign language than is done now. It is possible to learn how to translate French into English in a comparatively short time and a minimum of preparation; it is also possible to learn enough grammar to answer the direct questions on grammar that are usually found on a college paper. It takes, however, long and thorough study before one is able to write French correctly and well. If more credits were assigned to that part of the examination, I am positive that fewer candidates with only a few

weeks' preparation would succeed in passing the entrance examinations in French.

Then, again, if all freshmen courses in modern languages were conducted in the foreign language and students unable to follow such a recitation were conditioned, no student could attend these classes unless he had had plenty of practice in hearing and speaking the language. Such training would then become imperative for the schools. No teacher could then neglect that important feature of modern language instruction, because, if he did, his pupils would not be prepared for college and so be unable to go on with French or German in college. How much more inspiring it would be to teach French literature in that language than in English! It can be done and it should be done. I am sure that if the modern language departments of our colleges and universities came to an understanding on this point we would see great progress in the use of the direct method, not merely in the secondary schools, but in the colleges and universities of our land.

This association has placed itself on record in regard to an aural and oral test in French and German for college entrance. That is excellent as far as it goes. The trouble is it does not go far enough and will not solve the problem. The college professor should practise what he preaches and adopt the direct method in his own classes. He ought to conduct all his courses as far as possible in the foreign tongue. Why not do it in college work as well as in school work? There are obstacles in the way, I know, but they are not greater than those the secondary school teacher has to surmount. I am aware that some of our colleges are doing this and doing it admirably. But judging from the reports I receive and the information I gather from former pupils who are in attendance at different universities, it is not the usual thing. My former pupils tell me that they study literature, reading a great number of books and doing a great deal of written work, but that French is not the language of the classroom, unless they happen to have a native Frenchman for teacher. And what is worse, the pupil who has had very little or no opportunity to hear French or speak it seems to get along about as well as the one who has been carefully trained in this respect. The former may not secure as high a grade in his work as the latter, but he gets through. I claim such a condition of affairs ought not to exist. I am aware this criticism does not

apply to all our universities and colleges, but the point I wish to make is that it should not apply to any.

In conclusion, let me sum up in a few words what I have just said. It is a fact that the present college entrance examinations in French, and in German as well, do not prevent the student who is insufficiently prepared from passing them. Such a student is not fit, I believe, to go on with freshmen French and ought not to be admitted to that class. I propose two remedies for this evil. In the first place, we should have an aural and oral test for all candidates in modern languages and the inability to pass this test satisfactorily should condition any candidate in that subject. We ought also to assign more credits to that part of the written examination which really tests the candidate's knowledge of French or German, namely, the composition question. In the second place, I suggest that all freshmen courses in modern languages be conducted in the foreign language, as far as possible. Then the student who has been coached primarily to pass a written examination in French or German, but has had no practice in hearing the language and speaking it will find it impossible to follow with any success the courses given in that language. It may not be possible to bring this about all at once, without causing some trouble, but I firmly believe it ought to be done. The result would be most beneficial both for the college and the schools. The standard of modern language teaching would be raised and the quality of work greatly increased. Our slogan could then be in fact, as it is now in theory: "Quality and not quantity of work." Thoroughness would replace superficiality in the preparation of pupils who intend to enter college. The schools would have to give aural and oral training to the pupils taking modern languages. School teachers and college instructors would have to be thoroughly well prepared to give this instruction and our students would gain a real knowledge of French, German or Spanish that would be of practical value to them after leaving college. All this can only be secured by insisting upon a modified form of the direct method in all college exercises as well as in school work.

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## A TABULATION OF THE GERMAN MODALS

The modal auxiliaries always seem to be a stumbling block in the study of German grammar. The chief reason for difficulty in connection with them lies, of course, in the deficiency of the English and the necessary paraphrasing of the modal ideas. Not one of the German modals has an equivalent which always and completely renders the idea into English but each must be translated as the context may demand in some one of a number of ways. The result of so many English "meanings" for the one German word is that the pupil's impressions are at first quite vague and hazy. The question, therefore, presents itself, "How may we gain a definite and accurate conception of the modals for ourselves, and how may we best transmit this conception to our pupils?"

The method of the vest-pocket dictionary will never be successful; a vocabulary can not be a satisfactory one which merely consists of a long list of equivalents; one must know the real "content", the entire range of meaning of a word, and especially is this true in the case of the modals. Often one may bring home to the pupil the true significance of an expression by explaining why or how a particular word or phrase comes to have a given meaning. Where such words are built upon roots already known to the pupil or have a clear historical development, this is comparatively simple. Where such is not the case the teacher must endeavor by definition and illustration to give the pupil an adequate conception of the scope of the word.

In the course of my efforts during several years of teaching to render the modals more easy of comprehension the following table has gradually developed and has proved to be a very satisfactory outline from which to discuss the modals to the class. I claim for it nothing particularly new unless it be the concise and compact arrangement.

Under each of the modals in the table has been given the general idea which is conveyed by it, and it is this general idea which must be impressed upon the pupil. He must in each case know the content and real significance of the modal and not just an English equivalent. He must be lead to think and not merely to remember. *Können* conveys the idea of ability or possibility and is not

	Potential	Dynamic
Dependant upon physical or general conditions or attendant circumstances.	<i>können</i> ability, possibility (can, is able to)	<i>müssen</i> necessity. (must, has to, is compelled to)
Dependant upon an outside agency or moral law.	<i>dürfen</i> permission, permissibility. (may, is permitted to) (nicht dürfen = mustn't)	<i>sollen</i> assertion, intention or determination made with reference to the subject of <i>sollen</i> by an outside agency; a command. (shall, is to, is said to, in past subjunctives—ought to)
Dependant upon the (personal) attitude of the subject itself.	<i>mögen</i> inclination, liking, likelihood, probability, plausibility. (may, like to)	<i>wollen</i> assertion, intention or determination of the subject itself. (will, intends to, is going to, wants to, claims to—in this latter sense with the perfect infinitive, an assertion with reference to past time.)

merely a translation of *can* or *is able to*. *Dürfen* expresses permission or permissibility and is not primarily a translation of certain phases of *may*; *nicht dürfen* indicates the withholding of permission and conveys, therefore, the same idea that is so frequently rendered by the English *mustn't*. *Sollen* and *wollen* are alike in many respects but differ in one very essential point. They both express assertion, intention or determination but in the case of *sollen* the assertion is made by an outside agency with reference to the subject of *sollen*, while in the case of *wollen* it is the subject himself who makes the assertion or expresses the intention or determination. Thus:—*Er soll hier gewesen sein*—He is said to have been here. Rumor reports it, someone else asserts it about him. *Er soll morgen kommen*—He is to come to-morrow. Someone other than he says so. *Du sollst nicht töten!*—The command is given by someone other than the *Du*. But on the other hand:—*Er will hier gewesen sein*—He himself says that he has been here, he *claims* to have been here. He makes the assertion himself. *Er will morgen kommen*—

He *intends* to come to-morrow, he wants to, it is his own plan, he himself is determined upon it. *Mögen* expresses liking or inclination and is parallel to *wollen* in indicating the personal attitude of the subject itself. On the other hand it often expresses what in the mind of the speaker is plausible or admissible or even probable. *Es mag wohl sein*—it *may* be.

The six modals naturally fall into two groups of three and three groups of two. The two larger groups I have designated "Potential" and "Dynamic". The potential modals, *können*, *dürfen* and *mögen* tell us that certain obstacles to action do not exist, or, to put it positively, that certain favorable conditions do exist; *können* informs us that there is physical ability or possibility, *dürfen* that the act is permissible and *mögen* that there is personal inclination or even likelihood, but there is no expression of the necessity of the act taking place, nor actual assertion that it has taken place or is going to, nor determination to that effect. In no case is the action referred to as happening; hence the term, "potential." The dynamic modals on the other hand involve a direct assumption with reference to the consummation of the action; *müssen* takes for granted the possibility and directly expresses the necessity; *sollen* asserts definitely that the action *is* to take place or *has* taken place, while even its subjunctive still insists upon a duty or obligation; *wollen* very clearly states intention and determination.

In the transverse divisions of the table *können* and *müssen* naturally fall together in their expression of an idea dependent upon physical law or general or attendant circumstances; *dürfen* and *sollen* both express the attitude of some outside agency or the working of a moral law; while *mögen* and *wollen* are as clearly parallel in so far as they indicate the attitude of the subject itself.

In the table I have not attempted to specify all the finer shades of meaning. That could only prove detrimental to a treatment whose chief virtue lies in its conciseness and brevity. Many of the so-called "secondary" meanings, however, are mentioned in the table and practically all which are not allow of easy and direct explanation from it. A table of this sort is at best merely an outline, but it does afford concise and available means of associating the modals and at the same time of distinguishing between them.



## REVIEWS

**Elementary German Syntax** Reviews with Exercises by B. Q. Morgan. Henry Holt and Co., 1916. 12mo., xv + 86 pp.

In 1882, Professor von Jagemann published his *Elements of German Syntax*. A companion volume of *Materials for German Composition* soon followed. In writing the *Syntax* the author had in mind the needs of teachers and students of German composition in so far as that term was synonymous with translation from the vernacular into German, the only method of composition in general favor at the time. His plan was to present the most important characteristics of German syntax from the point of view of the English language. By excluding everything uncommon and obvious he was able to treat important differences more fully and to illuminate them with numerous examples. The latter feature—abundant illustrative material—deserves special mention, it seems, for it has enhanced in no small degree the pedagogical value of a book that for a quarter of a century has had undisputed possession of its field.

Now Dr. Morgan's *Elementary German Syntax* enters the field as a competitor. Fundamentally, the two books are one in plan and purpose; yet the new publication has a rather good reason for its existence. Omitting most of the specifically lexicographical and other matter for which a need is less evident today, it is, in a stricter sense, a syntax. Secondly, it will carry wherever it goes some fresh light on the teaching of German grammar, especially on some of its more difficult chapters, e. g. the subjunctive. That the author has borrowed the light largely from other successful teachers and investigators should not in the least detract from the merit of the book. To each man his honest due, to Dr. Morgan the credit for clear thought and a somewhat rare power of concise, lucid exposition. Hence not the least of the book's merits is its "Übersichtlichkeit." Furthermore, it is not difficult to find on every page a painstaking attempt to eliminate the trivial, and to illuminate the important, and to attain brevity without sacrificing explicitness and clarity. Brevity he always attains, but there is a question in my mind whether it has not at times been made an end in itself rather than a means to an end. On this point, however, no one has a right to be dogmatic.

The subject matter is presented in 122 paragraphs so listed in the Contents as to compensate fully for the absence of an index. The paragraphs are grouped under the different parts of speech, a chapter on prepositions, however, is conspicuous for its absence. Yet the teacher's duty is only half done when the student knows what case to use in a given instance. A greater difficulty confronting him far beyond the elementary stage is what preposition to use, if any. To answer that question correctly, more attention must be given to the character of the word that precedes. The brief chapters that have been added on numerals and on orthographical rules including punctuation will serve a useful purpose. In lieu of a companion volume of materials there have been added fifteen *ungraded*, carefully selected syntactical exercises to aid the student in a practical mastery of the principles set down. How the author expects the student to acquire such mastery has been set forth at some length

in the preface, and let me say, both teacher and student will do wisely to heed the directions there given. Fractional preparation spells certain failure in the subsequent written work. Each exercise is designed to concentrate attention on one particular part of the *Syntax* indicated with paragraph references in the heading; other important syntactical difficulties involved are pointed out, however, by reference to the proper paragraphs of the *Syntax*. Occasionally a word may present two difficulties, two such instances have been noted in the text, to them a third might be added in view of its case, namely 'senses' (p. 64, l. 7). An eight-page vocabulary immediately follows the exercises.

If we subtract the additions here (ca. 30 pp.) and the omissions there (ca. 85 pp.), the remainders will show a net reduction of thirty pages in a total of eighty-five. The sections on the noun, adverb and conjunction, infinitive, and verbal noun have each been boiled down to half or less than half their former proportions. The fifteen pages on word-order have shrunk to less than five. One subject has been treated somewhat more fully—the subjunctive. If we now ask if any gains have been made and we answer in the affirmative, as I believe we must, we shall also have to qualify our answer immediately by pointing out some of the possible improvements in details.

The desire to be brief, I believe, has led to some striking inaccuracies and omissions. Among them I note the following. First, the vowel that follows *ss* (*ß*), in German script, need not be short, as "between short vowels" implies; cf. *aggressiv*, *Assessoren*, *Passau*, *Chaussee*, *Passagier*, *passieren* and a score of others. The section on syllabication should state what to do with a single consonant between vowels, for the practice in English is misleading. Again, if a comma separates *all complete sentences* or clauses, no matter what their relation to each other (§5, a), one wonders where a freer use of the semicolon comes in (§4). As against *alle gute* present usage favors *alle guten*, therefore, if the intention is to show vacillating usage, *manche* would serve that purpose better (§9, 2). The relative superlative is always construed with the definite article, unless a dependent genitive precedes, but not, as stated, "except when dependent on a genitive" (§16). Strictly speaking, §67, 5 belongs in its present form to the chapter on word-order, to justify its presence here, insert "such as *feind*, *fremd*, etc. . . ." after "Adjectives." It is somewhat difficult for me to see the purpose of a rule stating that some adjectives take a complementary genitive or dative and then leaving the character of such adjectives to be inferred from one example. Therefore, *bewusst*, *fähig*, *schuldig* and *voll* might be inserted in §65.

But brevity, I suppose, forbids a multiplicity of examples. Of the several types of the uninflected adjective in common use none are illustrated save the somewhat poetical appositive (§10). The last clause of the rule for the position of the possessive genitive should perhaps read "unless it is a proper name", or else *die Tochter der alten Frau*, the first illustration under the rule, contradicts it. The objective genitive is represented by two examples, while no mention is made of the subjective genitive. *Einer der Männer* contains a partitive genitive, it is true, but does its genitive denote a part of something? *Er ist mir vorausgeill* would illustrate what *Ich habe es Ihnen vorausgesagt* (67, c) does not, namely a dative governed by the verb prefix. *Können* (96, 2b) and

*mögen* (98, 1a), are both said to convey the sense of a conceded possibility, but unless they be further differentiated may not the student justly infer that they are interchangeable? The ingenious grouping in § 95 may and may not lead him aright. Neither under the modal auxiliaries nor under word-order do I find any reference to the position of the transposed auxiliary with the so-called "double infinitive." Perhaps the reason is not far to seek, at all events not so far as that for the omission of the pluperfect tense, of the true imperative, of the infinitive and perfect participle in commands and directions, and, finally, of the position of the subordinate verb in clauses of the type: *Auch meint er, sie könnten dem Weltkriege ruhig entgegensehen*". A reference to § 105 would in the last case have sufficed.

Let us pass on to the subjunctive. Dr. Morgan, I believe, is the first editor to follow the lead of Professor Prokosch in his conception of the subjunctive and the conditionals. The German subjunctive, he holds, is used to express four time ideas, *present, past, future* and *future perfect* time. Each is represented by two tense forms, called the *first* and *second present*, etc., the basis for the *first* forms being the present and for the *second* always the preterit stem. Thus *sei* and *wäre*, *habe* and *hätte*, *werde* and *würde* are absolutely identical in point of time, but in function only to a limited extent. What is true of the simple verbs is true also of the compound tenses in which they may appear as auxiliaries. How these forms may have arisen is a question that may still engage scholars, for us the important thing is that, from a pedagogical point of view, the new system is infinitely superior to the old. No teacher who has given the new a trial will desert it for the old. For convenience in drill and practice, Dr. Morgan suggests a system of naming the forms, but the system suggested is capable of improvement. Let the numeral 1 and 2 designate the forms and the letters *abcd* the four tenses. Then the *first* present would be *1a*, the *second* *2a*, and not as at present *1a* and *1b*, respectively. To have to associate *first* and I with different things is confusing and may be responsible for a typographical error on p. 51, l. 4 f. b., where we read *2b* for *1b*. *Werde* and *würde* should follow *habe* and *hätte* in the paradigms as they do in the text on page 47. Likewise on p. 51, the forms of *werden* should appear side by side with those of *haben*.

A few typographical errors have, of course, crept in. "And so" should be added to § 8, p. 5. One *Etwas* should be struck out on p. 6, l. 5 f. b.; and for "form" read "forms" on p. 52, last line.

The book is by its very title elementary in character; for the student who is sufficiently advanced in the study of German to derive any real benefit from translation it contains little that he *should* not know at the outset.

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J. LASSEN BOYSEN.

**A Trip to South America;** exercises in Spanish composition, by S. M. Waxman. D. C. Heath & Co., 1916. iii + 100 pp. 50 cents.

This little composition book offers new material since it departs from the usual trip to Spain and takes the student to South America. It resembles

Crawford's *Spanish Composition* and Umphrey's *Spanish Prose Composition* in that it deals with two men who are also about to leave the United States for a summer trip. Mr. Waxman's book is somewhat easier and shorter than either of the two composition books just mentioned.

*A Trip to South America* is divided into twenty-five lessons, each consisting of three parts: (1) a section of Spanish; (2) a few sentences for verb drill; and (3) a composition based on the Spanish selection.

(1). Mr. Waxman has been quite successful in this imaginary conversation; the Spanish is clear, natural and idiomatic; in the three lessons where he has quoted from other books the selections fit admirably. The Spanish is unusually good, except for a very few americanisms, e. g. page 15, line 5, "un asiento cómodo y hágase Vd de cuenta"; page 26, lines 8-10, where the thought is confused; page 28, line 20, "en la España"; page 41, line 2, "con la Europa"; page 43, line 6, "para" (?); line 8, "la oficina" (?); page 68, line 5 "en la media de la noche"; page 48, last line, "su propio dueño".

(2). The sentences for verb drill may be considered the best part of the book, since they consist of every day phrases formed with irregular verbs. The notes are just enough and to the point. A few things that might be questioned and that may cause difficulties in the verb drill are these: page 2, lines 16-17, is "pensar" or "creer" to be used here?; page 5, line 6, "Can you speak Spanish?" "poder" or "saber"?; page 8, line 4, "tener que, prisa, tener ganas de, miedo" should be reworded, as it confuses the student; line 23, "when" should have a note asking for the subjunctive.

(3). The compositions based on the Spanish exercises present no serious difficulties and make good, clear Spanish when once translated. Some teachers may object because the English follows too closely the Spanish, but this was done purposely, as Mr. Waxman says in the preface, so that beginners will not make too many mistakes.

*A Trip to South America* should prove valuable as an elementary composition book and it can be used to advantage in a class in conversation.

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**Le Premier Livre and Le Second Livre**, by Albert A. Méras, and B. Méras. Illustrations by Kerr Eby; American Book Co., 1915. 12mo., 200 pp.; and 12 mo., 214 pp.; 64 cents each.

*Le Premier Livre* is a grammar and reader combined. The book is intended to cover all the work of the first half year. The aim of the authors is to present from the start "natural, practical and interesting French." The two or three pages making up each of the sixty lessons which compose the volume, are carefully divided into five parts with occasional review or drill exercises. The five parts of each lesson consist of: 1. A short vocabulary. 2. A portion of the text taken from Hector Malot's *Sans Famille*. 3. Conversation, consisting of five brief questions on the text. 4. Grammar, involving hardly more than one or two of the most indispensable features of French grammar. 5.

Short composition exercises based on the text. Both *Le Premier Livre* and *Le Second Livre* contain French-English and English-French vocabularies.

About seven pages are devoted to the subject of French pronunciation which is presented from the "popular standpoint". Nevertheless, with all due regard to limitations in the interest of both brevity and popularity, such statements as the following are vulnerable:

1. "a short, somewhat like the first o in follow: **la, table, quatre.**" If the American pupils follow this direction, it may well be questioned whether any one familiar with the normal pronunciation of these words is likely to understand them. 2. "a long, like a in Arthur: **a-ation, -as, -ass.**" (a) When a has a circumflex accent: **pâle.** (b) When followed by **-tion: conversation.** (c) Generally when followed by **s: pas.**" Thus we are given to understand that there are in French a "short" a like the first o in follow and a "long" a like the a in Arthur, the two being exemplified as just indicated. Such a statement simply perpetuates the old fashioned tradition of confusing quantity and quality. A pupil should be told from the very beginning that quantity is one thing and that quality is another; that two qualities of a are recognizable, that in **patte**, and that in **pas**; that, as regards the quantity of these two as, each may be short, as in **patte** and **pas**, or long as in **part** and **passe**, respectively. Moreover, the a in **table**, as the authorities state, is not short. As an example of the so called e mute which is "slightly pronounced at the end of a syllable in the body of a word," **acheter** is given; but, except in poetry, this e in **acheter** is absolutely silent. When speaking of the vowels open e, open o, closed o, ou and u, nothing whatever is stated indicating that such a feature as quantity exists; for instance, under ou, all the examples given are short: **tout, ou, sous, nous.**

As regards the treatment of the consonants, from the brief indication following the letters, **b, d, f, k, l, m, n, p, v**, "pronounced as in English," the pupil may well get the impression that French pronunciation offers no serious difficulty. If the pupil persists in pronouncing the word for lady like the "swear-word" in English, and all other consonants on analogous lines, with the directions as just indicated the pupil cannot well be blamed. However, it would appear that this whole matter of pronunciation is looked upon by the editor, as a matter, which, while it will not do to ignore it, yet is hardly to be taken seriously as offering a panacea for the acquiring of even approximately correct pronunciation, for the reason that correct pronunciation is not apt to be acquired that way. So much for the least satisfactory part of *le Premier Livre*, and of its continuation *le Second Livre*.

The material in both parts is admirably selected. In fact the editor could hardly have made a better selection upon which to base the Direct Method work than Malot's *Sans Famille* and Jule Verne's *le Tour du monde en quatre-vingt jours*, both stories because of their literary directness and human interest appealing strongly to all classes of readers. Moreover, the combining of the short English theme to be turned into French, with the Direct Method is a valuable asset giving variety to the latter that is distinctly profitable and thoroughly interesting. These two Parts of a year's continuous course, *le Premier Livre* and *le Second Livre*, may be used effectively by almost any

qualified teacher of French, and especially so by one who has at heart the principles of the Direct Method.  
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JAMES GEDDES, JR.

**Otto Ernst, *Asmus Sempers Jugendlund***, edited by Carl Osthaus.  
D. C. Heath & Co., 1916. 12 mo., xi + 305 pp.; 60 cents.

*Asmus Sempers Jugendlund*, written in 1904 by Otto Ernst (Schmidt), and now edited for American schools by Professor Osthaus, represents a labor of love on the part of both author and editor. The novel, a most artistic portrait of the author's own boyhood, gives us a very realistic view of many institutions of modern Germany. We find in it a wonderful description of the milieu but always by an optimist, and without any plainly visible attempt at dogmatization or moralization. The story grips the heart-strings of the reader, and the book offers splendid opportunities on every page for a study of German 'Realien'.

Professor Osthaus's edition of this novel is an excellent piece of work. The Introduction shows such a careful study and deep appreciation of Otto Ernst's works, and is so well worded, that it is certainly worth rereading.

The abridging of the novel for class-room use is less pleasing, for it destroys the continuity, the author's even flow of thought and language. The hand of the stranger interrupts and disturbs. However, the abridgment is done with such skill as to reduce this evil to a minimum.

The Notes and Vocabulary are very satisfactory. They are so well worked out that a high school sophomore, taking third semester German, read the entire 176 pages in eight days, one hour each day, without finding any word, phrase, or sentence new to him, that was not fully explained, excepting the one word "Blattern" page 73, line 7. On page 180, a note states that the usual day for confirmation in Germany is the first Sunday after Easter. Is it not the Sunday before Easter, Palm Sunday? Page 189, note 4, should read "In lines 15-17," not "10-12." Page 199, "war . . . . doch in die Glieder gefahren" is translated too freely. I should translate it "had, after all, given them a good scare." Page 204, the meaning of the proverb "Ein Schelm," etc., should be given.

The book is singularly free from typographical errors. I found only one, and that may not be typographical. On page 61, line 6, I should substitute "nun" for "nur."

These suggested changes or corrections are mere trifles. What I really regret is that the edition does not present German questions on the text. There are three large classes of teachers who need them. Those who do not have a ready command of modern every-day German, those who have neither sufficient experience nor training to ask pedagogically correct questions, and those over-worked teachers who cannot possibly find the time to write out and multigraph the questions.

The book is excellent for third semester German in college or fourth semester in high school.

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O. P. KLOFSCH.



## NOTES AND NEWS

The business manager begs leave to assure the readers that he is doing everything in his power to keep the mailing list up-to-date. The mailing list is naturally developing piecemeal, since the teachers are only gradually beginning to realize the value of our publication. The list has been growing at the rate of 50 to 150 new subscribers per month and THE JOURNAL now reaches about 2000 subscribers. The newcomers are of course, entitled to all the back numbers of the current volume, since only subscriptions for this, and not the calendar year can be accepted.

We are trying to issue each number as soon after the first of the month as is possible. Should THE JOURNAL not arrive on time, or the addresses be incorrect, the business manager will appreciate a short note to that effect, and give it prompt attention.

Bearing the above in mind, as well as the fact that the business manager cannot control THE JOURNAL after it leaves the printer, the readers will realize that errors are almost unavoidable, and will, therefore, show all forbearance when they themselves are the victims of mistakes.

Inasmuch as the November issue has been exhausted and it will take some time for reprints to be made, subscriptions will be filled as early in the future as possible. If they are not received by March 15th, kindly notify the business manager, who will forward copies at once.

**German Games and German and English Books** recommended for use in connection with the study of German in Junior and Senior High Schools by the department of German of the State Normal School, Emporia, Kansas, is a small pamphlet containing some helpful suggestions in the way of games as supplementary work in Junior High School classes and as devices for club work in Senior High Schools. The material is limited and merely suggests to the teacher what can be done with a little ingenuity and originality to make such exercises pleasant as well as profitable. The portion dealing with books is of less consequence. Although the title is English, the text is in German.

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The managing editor has been informed that D. C. Heath and Company have in preparation a complete vocabulary of all words that appear in Nelson's *Spanish American Reader*. This vocabulary will take the place of the present partial vocabulary in all subsequent editions. It will also be printed as a separate pamphlet and copies will be sent free of expense to all who possess copies of *The Reader*.